

**MINUTES OF BANWELL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD AT THE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 28th APRIL 2025**

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Paul Harding (Chairman of Banwell Parish Council).

Present: 26 members of the public, 9 Parish Councillors, 1 District Councillor and the minutes were taken by Liz Shayler (Clerk to Banwell Parish Council).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor Steve Davies.

2. MINUTES OF LAST PARISH ASSEMBLY

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 22nd of April 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and were duly signed by Cllr Harding.

3. BANWELL PARISH COUNCIL –

i. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Paul Harding, gave the following report.

I think I can only start with after a hundred years, despite the nay sayers and purveyors of untruths, Banwell is finally getting its Bypass. Finance, planning and a contractor are all in place to deliver this essential piece of infrastructure and you can't fail to notice the works are progressing aplomb. Expect disruption until 2027, but in the end, a significant proportion of the traffic will be removed from the village. On the evidence from our Vehicle Activated Speed unit, we estimate more than 5,000,000 vehicles enter the village each year. We are aware that not everyone is in favour of the Bypass and BPC have been fully aware from the start of the current project that this meant the Garden Village originally proposed in the Joint Spatial Plan would become a reality. However, as the late Derek Mead once said to the Parish Council: "You can have the houses and a Bypass, or just the houses." BPC has liaised closely with NSC and the Bypass team who are here tonight. In case you were wondering - YES, there will be a party on the Bypass before it opens.

That leads me on to the Wolvershill Road development. We have had meetings with the main developers and NSC to influence the developers to benefit both current and future residents. We have held public meetings for residents to air their views. There are still areas of concern regarding the strategic green gap and placing of facilities, but we will continue to challenge where necessary. We have met with NSC to discuss the disastrous proposal to close the bridge over the M5 towards Worle for cars – now withdrawn, in no small part to the efforts of Steve Voller. We look forward to NSC putting the M5 Junction 21 relief road on the Master Plan for the Wolvershill Rd estate, and the completion of the North South link road through Locking Parklands and Mead Fields, or at the very least pedestrian access to the new Locking Parklands schools from Mead Fields.

Whilst I have started with the two biggest events affecting us, Banwell is far more than just the Bypass and Wolvershill Road development.

In the last year we have lost Cllrs Gibbons and McCarthy but gained Cllr Thain. I thank both Cllrs Gibbons and McCarthy for their service to the community. We have a vacancy if anyone is interested. We have recruited an Environment and Biodiversity Officer – Amy Symonds who will talk to you next. The Clerk and Cllrs Blatchford and Thian have attended stakeholder meetings on the Mead Fields development. We intend to hold PC meetings on Mead Fields in the future once a suitable venue is in place.

We work closely with our Ward Councillor Joe Tristram who is quick to take up matters when we raise them.

We have enhanced the Recreation Ground from CIL monies, and we now have the toddler area accessible 365 days a year, and an all-year accessible path constructed which means Banwell now has a safe place for children on bikes/scooters to safely exercise away from the traffic.

We continue to offer support to the residents through:

- Tea and Tech / You Can Do I.T. – at the YCC.
- Village Cleans.
- Provision of dog bins in Banwell and Mead Fields.
- Community Picnic on the Rec – this year's will be at Banwell Football Club.
- Continued live streaming of our meetings.
- Continued provision of the Banwell Youth Club – meets Tuesdays 6.30 – 8.30 (10-18yr).
- Despite storm Darragh, we put on another very successful Christmas Market.
- Soup and a Roll – cream teas for the summer at the YCC.
- Continued support to Citizens Advice.
- Continued provision of volunteers for the school crossing – particular thanks go to Jonathan and Cllr Arlidge. If anyone else can assist – speak to the Clerk.
- Joined the West of England Impact Alliance initiative looking at eradicating loneliness.
- Regular updates to the community by our Communications Officer Sally on Facebook, Instagram and our Website. We no longer use Twitter/X.
- Continued outpost of Weston Foodbank.

Finally, much of what we do could not occur without the input of our volunteers, councillors past and present and especially Liz our Clerk and her family who are always available and give up significant amounts of their time - Russ, Bella, Tom and Anne. Thank you.

Banwell – A Community, Not Just A Traffic Jam.

ii. Clerks report

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Statement of Accounts for the 2024/25 financial year is now available on the website, with hard copies available on request. The level of reserves was highlighted, including earmarked reserves for a cemetery extension and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds allocated to the recently constructed all-weather path around the Recreation Ground.

The Clerk was pleased to report that, due to an increase in the Council Tax Base, the cost to a Band D property has increased by only 4p, bringing the annual charge to £86.01. The Council recognised the continued challenges posed by rising household utility costs and has sought to minimise the financial impact on residents.

The Clerk invited the Assembly to seek clarification on any issues. No queries were raised.

iii. Environment and Biodiversity Officer

The Environment and Biodiversity Officer gave a brief PowerPoint presentation outlining her current role and future plans. No questions were raised following the presentation. A copy of the presentation is available on request from the Clerk.

4. NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

i) Ward Councillors Report

Councillor Tristram introduced himself and provided an overview of his responsibilities, along with examples of how he has supported Banwell residents. These included:

- Assisting with waste and recycling issues.
- Liaising with and on behalf of residents in the new Mead Fields development.
- Addressing concerns related to the proposed Wolverhill development and its potential impact on existing residents.
- Supporting the resolution of footpath issues, including a collapsed culvert.

The Chairman expressed gratitude to Councillor Tristram for his consistent presence and invaluable contributions to the community.

5. MEET THE CONTRACTOR - Galliford Try and the NSC Banwell Bypass Team

Representatives from the NSC Banwell Bypass Team and their contractor, Galliford Try, introduced themselves and gave a brief presentation. They outlined some of the challenges encountered to date and highlighted the progress made since Galliford Try joined the project. This included photographs of the newly constructed haul road and waterway diversions, followed by a high-level programme overview with key project milestones.

6. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY

No PCSO was present, and no annual report had been received. The public was reminded that a monthly report is presented at each Parish Council meeting and is recorded under public participation in the minutes.

7. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AWARD 2025

The Clerk was pleased to present the 2025 Recognition of Service to the Community Award. This annual award recognises individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to village life, often working quietly and consistently without expectation of thanks. The 2025 recipient was acknowledged for long-standing service as a bell ringer, and more recently as Tower Captain, where she has led the team and helped maintain this valued local tradition.

Following the withdrawal of the toddler group by North Somerset Children's Services in February 2024, the recipient stepped forward to establish a new group. Her efforts have provided a welcoming and much-needed space for families with young children, which has been greatly appreciated by both parents and children alike.

In recognition of this significant contribution to the community, the 2025 award was presented to Jade Longmoor.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A resident asked about plans for the centre of the Parish now that the Banwell Bypass build and construction contract have been signed. The Clerk reiterated that, according to the Banwell Bypass presentation, mitigation works in the village centre are scheduled to take place after the Bypass opens, in order to help divert traffic away from the village. It is hoped that the detailed design for these works will be published in approximately 18 months. The Bypass team will liaise with the Parish Council, who will ensure that the plans are publicised and that any comments received are considered.

9. REPORTS BY VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Reports were presented by the following village organisations over the past year.

Banwell Village Hall – Neil Humphries-Smith
Banwell Bell Ringers – Jade Longmoor
Royal British Legion* – Penny Motram
Women's Institute* - Viv Bailey
Banwell Methodists* – John Batt
Banwell School PTA – Cllr Tara Wright
Men's Breakfast* – Denis Cruze
Banwell Potigny Town Twinning* – Dinah Harrison
1st Banwell Scouts – Laurence Pool
Banwell Gardening Club – Lynne Ralph
Banwell Football Club – Brian Peat

(*Copies of these written reports are held by Banwell Parish Council and may be inspected by making application to the Parish Clerk).

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF ELECTORS – Monday 27th April 2026

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked all those who had attended.

..... Chairman

..... Date